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## SCHMOLLER ON CLASS CONFLICTS IN GENERAL<sup>1</sup>

In every state and in every period, class contrasts, class struggles, and class domination depend, (1) upon the degree of unity or of diversity in the citizen body; these citizens are formed into groups by race, occupation, distribution of income and property, intellectual and religious culture, etc.; (2) upon the type of distinction and of organization peculiar to the classes; (3) upon the strength and organization of the civic government, which stands for the unity and the peace of society. Every great society exhibits historically a picture of a social differentiating process. A counterbalancing process also goes on by virtue of the force of common heredity, common language, common morality, common religion; in short, the *aggregate* of cultural factors, and finally the unity of law, of institutions, of the civic power. Every actual situation is a diagonal of these two opposing series of factors.

The smaller, more primitive, more rude the social bodies are, the minuter the class contrasts. Great, ancient, civilized peoples always have important class contrasts. They grow, in the first place, with the great economic advances. The increase of money and *entrepreneur* economy has done most to intensify these contrasts and to lead to class conflicts. The decisive factor in this latter development has always been that along with the growing economic contrasts there was the dissolution of the older psychomoral and religious unity of the folk. In these periods the upper

<sup>1</sup> The European war forces the sociologist to review some of his generalizations, and to consider to what extent major and minor incidents of the struggle confirm or impeach previous conclusions. It is in order therefore to publish this translation of one of Schmoller's most characteristic contributions to general sociological theory. The passage occurs in his *Grundriss der allgemeinen Volkswirtschaftslehre* (6th ed., 1904), II, 542 ff. For a number of years the translator has found the passage a convenient basis for discussion of the conflict category with graduate students. It is the most general portion of the subdivision in which it occurs, entitled "Relations between State and Social Classes in General."

The version here presented takes certain liberties with the text. In spite of a few compressions, paraphrases, and alterations of constructions, it is hoped that the author's meaning has been rendered with substantial fidelity.—A. W. S.

and progressing classes on the whole increased more in intellect and in technico-economic ability than in social and political virtues. The lower classes easily lagged behind in development of the intellect and of economico-technical qualities. They lost a part of their old virtues (fidelity, obedience, temperance) and they did not at once gain as a compensation increase of other higher qualities. The recovery of unifying supreme ideals of morality and of societary constitution has been difficult in such times of the dissolution of the old societary constitution and of religious conceptions. Indeed it was often wholly impossible, often possible only after long struggles and mistaken endeavors.

Accordingly the *degree* of class contrasts, of class conflicts, of class domination, varies greatly in different peoples. We must now get at, first, an understanding of the nature of class conflicts; second, of the nature of class dominance; third, of the opposing legal and constitutional development, as well as of the *adjustment* of the class conflicts:

a) Wherever there are different classes, they have on the one hand various, distinct, even contradictory interests; but on the other hand they also have common interests. The former or divergent interests are predominantly of an external, practical, and economic sort; they aim at immediate ends. The latter, or common interests, are of a more ideal and spiritual sort. They refer to the total purposes of society and state and to the future. To a considerable degree the former are unorganized, or only loosely organized. At any rate they have a compact organization only under particular circumstances. The latter, or common interests, have also a loose organization of customs and morality; but in state and church, in law and institutions, they have always a certain firmly jointed organization of force, which, to be sure, possesses at different times very different degrees of power. The more strongly the common feelings and the great national purposes emerge, the firmer the civic organization of power eventually becomes, the more will the particularized class interests in time be forced to subordinate, co-ordinate, and adjust themselves to one another. In the larger states, with pronounced class structure, however, these special interests in turn will always occasionally

assert themselves, and rightfully, for progress results only from certain frictions and trials of strength. From these the victory of the better is at last gained. The whole interior development thus rests upon the relations of tension, upon the struggles and peace treaties of the social classes, upon the craft and the circumspection of the government, upon the skill and power of its leading minds in arranging their peace agreements and in winning the victory for the total interest over the separate class interests.

Accordingly the history of folk-economy, of society, and of the state falls into epochs of social peace and others of social disturbance. Even in the former, class antitheses are not lacking. They are, however, either latent, wholly controlled by common feelings, interests, and organizations, or after certain struggles they have withdrawn from prominence, because certain legal principles and institutions have furnished a basis for suppression or conciliation; that is for arriving at a tolerable point of equilibrium. Especially in times of long industrial and technical stability will such a peaceful condition occur. The feelings and relationships of classes will have adjusted themselves to a given distribution of power, of callings and of possessions, and to a certain civic and legal order. The social frictions are reduced to a small total. So far as there is class dominance at all, it is more or less recognized as rightful by all.

Contrasted with these periods are those of social conflict. They always occur if the division of economic or other labor is modified, if new upper classes are formed in the course of technical, intellectual, or other progress, if existing or new lower or middle classes are threatened with destruction or with a change for the worse in their condition. Then there must take place a struggle of classes, not merely of individuals. It is an incident of the universal striving for power and control. It is precipitated by the new conditions of life. It may last a longer or a shorter time. It may lead to reforms or revolutions. It may start the destruction of the states and the peoples concerned. Or it may end with some sort of equilibrium, with a pacified social condition.

The struggles will always have reference to three points: (1) to the constitutional law, to the filling of civic offices, to the appoint-

ment or choice of officials, choice of general or local officers, to the rights of organization, of assembly or of the press, to organization of the army and of the courts, to the position of church and school, to the removal of administrative abuses; (2) to class and family law in the strict sense, to class privileges and their abolition, and (3) to the distribution of income as affected on the one hand by the play of free forces in the market, and on the other hand by legal molding of economic life. Both of these factors are affected by the existing distribution of power, in connection with the contemporary morality and customs. Chiefly, however, it is the law and the great institutions which favor or embarrass the position of the particular classes in their struggle for economic advantage, and which aid or retard their access to profit and property. The entire legal boundary between common and private property, between common and private thrift, is decisive for the favoring of the upper or the lower classes. The higher economic classes have always understood more or less how to develop customs and laws in their favor, how thereby to increase their incomes and their property, how to give themselves an advantage in commercial intercourse. The middle classes have to a certain extent attempted the same thing, as opposed to the upper classes. Their success has been variable. The lower classes have always been most unfavorably situated for that sort of influence, but custom and law have sought to protect them, and every intelligent state government has had the same purpose. Wherever the self-consciousness of these classes awoke, wherever their culture and working efficiency grew, wherever they could form organizations, under such circumstances, like the middle class, they have striven for lightening of their burdens, for better means of getting a living, for easier labor conditions, for higher wages, or even for equal distribution of property and income. What in a more remote time everyone held to be proper and tolerable in all these respects appeared to a more refined sense of justice hard and intolerable. Accordingly, it was in part this actual unequal distribution of goods, in part the growing opinion about the same, that ever again, after temporary rest, summoned the social classes into the lists for struggle over change and improvement. In earlier times the issue was joined directly.

The upper classes retained the lion's share of conquered lands, of captured cattle, of slaves or serfs, without stopping for justification. On the other hand, the lower classes, when temporarily successful, carried out large confiscations of the property of the rich, new apportionments of the soil, restrictions upon quantities of land and cattle to be owned by the well-to-do, release from debt or reductions, gifts of farms in the colonies, or even free entrance to the theater or to the representative assembly, distribution of bread, and similar measures. The more complex a folk-economy is, and the more it is necessary to deal with very diverse classes, with an old division of labor and class structure, the less is it to be expected that such direct attacks, such bungling attempts at reformation and redistribution, will succeed. To be sure, some of these radical attempts have occurred in recent times. Legal emancipation of slaves and serfs, from 1500 to 1860, the abolition of burdens upon the peasantry, the creation of a free peasant class and free landed property, were extraordinarily radical measures. The introduction of craft freedom, indispensable for the new molding of folk-economy, was a deep slash into the existing legal order of industrial life. It immediately raised the higher class of *entrepreneurs*, just as it depressed the artisans and the laboring class. The struggle over taxes and other civic burdens has been at the forefront in all social conflicts, and every profound change (such, for example, as a new rapidly progressive income and inheritance tax) may greatly encourage one class while it severely embarrasses another. On the whole, however, even radicalism, the right wing of the social democracy, has today become relatively reasonable. Its standpoint is that no fairly earned property rights should be impaired, that means of production should be changed into collective property only with proper compensation. At the same time the more moderate of the radicals no more demand equality of all wages and incomes than they demand abolition of all private property. Gradual reconstruction, working toward more equitable future adjustment of the social organism, are becoming more and more the passwords, even among the radicals. The violent revolutionary movement is of course not satisfied with this program. The question is whether a more violent program can be restrained. We shall return to that question.

b) All the class conflicts appear to be the consequence of that which we are accustomed to call "class dominance." The concept should be defined. Linguistic usage in this case is of two sorts, the one less inclusive, the other more inclusive. In the former case we understand by class-dominance the social dependency relations which result from the customary industrial connections between the upper and the lower classes, between masters and slaves, between *entrepreneurs* and laborers, between creditors and debtors, between the strong merchants and the weak buyers. We have treated these relations in the whole of the preceding book. They rest upon the ground of private law. They have their origin in the spiritual, technical, economic culture of the persons concerned. They exert their share among the social influences of the situation according as morality, law, institutions, or civic constitutions are developed. The higher these latter have ascended, the easier it will always be to restrict or to abolish the worst abuses incident to class dominance. In the second case we understand by class dominance (and this second sense is more correct: we are now using the phrase in this way) that dependence of the weak class upon the strong which comes about from the fact that the latter influences and controls the civic power, that the strong class exploits not merely its economic superiority, but the political power, the sovereign rights of the state, the machinery of government, for its special purposes, for its economic advantage. Wherever anything of this sort is the case the above-pictured abuses of private rights will be the more excessive. In this sense also we are concerned, under the concept of class dominance, with the more extensive, the more significant, the quasi-constitutional, concept of class dominance. This occurs not merely as a quasi-natural, never entirely alterable, phenomenon, but always at the same time as a degeneration, as a fact to be fought with all the means available. For it is a part of the essential idea of the sovereign power that it is to be used in the interest of the whole society, not in the special interest of a class.

To approach an answer to the question, When and where has a class dominance in this sense occurred, and what gradations may it have? we must refer back to our discussion in Vol. I, § 101 ("The Origin and Nature of the Different Regional Corporate

Bodies") and to the introduction to the present chapter (§ 245, Relations between State and Social Classes in General).

If we disregard very minute communities, consisting of members who are almost entirely equal, and which consequently are able to govern themselves democratically by means of rotating presiding officers, and an assembly of all the citizens, not calling into requisition a compulsory force or machinery; with these exceptions all states of any size have developed a dominating civic power with far-reaching sovereign rights, with strong compulsory force, because power is essential to the nature of the state, because the domestic government of the state cannot possibly be on a high level without paramount power in the hands of the authorities, because the state cannot be strong against external enemies without this power. This power can never rest merely upon individual persons, and no more can it be exercised directly by the totality of thousands and millions of citizens. In order to be capable of decision and action it needs an organization of functionaries, of rulers and subjects, controllers and controlled. There must be groups of fighters, of priests, of noble families, of officials. The compact organization of these under a central head is the secret of the existence of the power of the state. With a chief or king supported by an aristocracy, a senate, we have the beginnings of all the higher civic constitutions of ancient times. The mass of the folk, originally participating in the national assemblies, sink more and more, even while retaining certain rights, to the condition of mostly passive members of the civic body. Slaves and serfs, moreover, have no voice at all. The kings, whose excesses and abuses were much more in evidence than their salutary functions, were, as we have seen, set aside by the aristocracy in Greece and Rome. The aristocracy, freed from control by a superior authority, easily fell eventually into the same abuses, and class dominance in the strict sense began. The attempt was made to reform the abuses by extension of civil rights to larger numbers—as in Rome by the admission of the rural plebeians. There was success along this line when, as in that case, the official and governmental laws were definite and comprehensive, and when the enfranchised had gone through a special discipline in the discharge of public duties.



If this was not the case, there was danger that the masses would prevail with selfish, short-sighted, impossible demands dictated by class interests. Revolution and destruction followed. A dictatorship then became the only recourse. This has been the termination of almost all the great social revolutions and civil wars.

c) Accordingly the history of social classes and of constitutions in the larger and more complex states seems to run through the following stages: (1) Establishment of a definite civic power, which rests exclusively upon the prerogatives of given monarchical or aristocratic groups. These narrow groups at first govern well and justly. In time, however, they fall into abuses of power, and class dominance begins. (2) The attempt is made to admit wider groups to power, electoral and legislative suffrage, and eligibility to office. At last the whole democratic mass is thus equalized. At first, if it is done wisely and temperately, this leads to good results, particularly so long as the administration remains in the hands of a firm, strong government. If the movement goes too far, if political incompetents gain too great influence, if the democratic masses acquire merely momentary advantage and profit, there follows, instead of the older aristocratic class control, the still worse democratic class control. All firm, secure civic leadership then ceases and with it all just government. (3) This can be prevented only if improvement and strengthening of the civic apparatus keeps pace in free states with the increasing influences of egoistic class interests. It is necessary also that the civic power shall remain in clean hands and shall continue to be stronger than the power and influence of the classes. This is possible through progressive development of a more and more precise and just constitutional and administrative law, by the education of civic officials of a non-partisan type in positions superior to class control, and who from highest to lowest govern state and society in harmonious co-operation.

We are thus in the presence of the perception that on the one hand there has been no folk of high civilization without certain onsets and inclinations toward class control; indeed, that all extensions of civil rights in the first instance increase the dangers

of such class control; that, on the other hand, every folk of high civilization in the constitutional state has sought and to a certain degree has found in the development of the sense of law and of legal control a counterbalance against class dominance and abuse of civic power.

The evolution of the moral and legal judgment of countless generations worked toward the end that certain principles of law became the supreme power in the world. The most barbarous chief who administered law, or who professed to do justice, claimed to act in the interest of all. It became more and more necessary for all rulers to consider the total interests, and to restrain their class egoism. In spite of all retrogressions, of all new class abuses, history exhibits progress, which rests on the one hand upon growing insight into political and social interdependences, upon increasing development of more refined sense of justice in the ruling and the ruled classes, and on the other hand upon the development of the legal institutions and the constitutional forms which hinder class abuses, and, in spite of those which cannot be prevented, make just government easier than formerly, and which consequently tend to assure to all classes their legitimate influence, while turning the mastery over to no single class. Of course this goal will never be fully reached. The great political movements however are incessantly making in that direction.

The Greek ideals of the state, the Roman administrative law in the time of the free state, the severe imperium of the Caesars, the law of the Middle Ages humanized by Christianity, the mediaeval church with its institutions, the incipient modern civic power, enlightened despotism, with its struggles against the control of society by feudally stratified classes, with its endeavors to establish a good judicial system, to maintain upright administration, the later constitutional organizations, with their guaranties of rights, the attempts of modern democracies to assure a more favorable position for the lower classes—all these are stations along the difficult, thorny path of humanity in its progress toward a great and firm government, with its minimum of class abuses.

It was the historical rôle of Caesarism and of hereditary monarchy to establish the strong, immovable civic authorities sup-

ported by police power, civil officials, and the military organization. It was the rôle of the constitutional and democratico-republican movements to fight down again the abuses of these powers. In the degree in which it proves possible to have firm, permanent civic authorities also in aristocratic and democratic republics, and particularly such authorities without class domination, monarchy as a form of the state will perhaps retire. Up to the present time this does not seem probable. The great republics of today, and the weak monarchies which are close to republics in essentials, manifest either plutocratic or feudal class dominance, or a civic form which inclines toward an autocracy of popular statesmen and dictators. The European states, accordingly, which combine with a secure hereditary monarchy a free constitution appear for the time being still to afford the best guaranty against too great abuses by classes.

The task of such modern monarchies will be lightened principally by the following circumstances: (1) by the *political division of labor*, which has created particular strata and classes, which devote the work of their lives to the service of the state and to public interests; (2) by the increasing *power of public opinion*; (3) by the fact that the social classes of today, while more strongly organized and in conflicts more selfish than formerly, and in the great European states more widely divided than ever, still are restrained by the law from irresponsible conduct, and they hold one another reciprocally in check. Even in the ecclesiastical states the relatively good government rested upon the fact of a special training of its rulers for their functions. To a certain extent this was also the case in the military aristocracy. Plato's idea of a government by philosophers springs from the same thought. This thought has been thus far very imperfectly carried out under the monarchical régime in the construction of the civil service. It was only in recent centuries that in the majority of European states a group of jurists, civil officials, military officers, clergy, scholars has been created, drawn often from all strata of society, yet all alike trained at the universities, secured in their economic positions partly by their own property, partly by salaries, and devoting life entirely to public affairs. Sometimes these very groups have degenerated

into narrowly selfish and self-centered classes. This was especially the case where the public power and the participation of the other citizens in public life did not prevent the abuses of the bureaucracy. But on the whole this sort of division of labor, this training of the rulers, with the traditions and standards of propriety which incidentally developed, have given to the civic machinery a strength and a compact organization which they have never had before, and on the other hand have made them a bulwark against class domination such as never existed in ancient or mediaeval states.

These groups are the bearers of an ideal conception of the state and of its economics. Even so far as they are of feudal aristocratic or of bourgeois origin, their horizon is no longer that of their economic class. They understand the interests of the middle and lower classes with whom they come into daily contact in transacting the business of their respective positions. In this respect they are much broader than the upper strata of business men. Together with the lawyers, physicians, artists, journalists, they constitute a sort of neutral zone, in contrast with the really struggling classes. Besides all this we have today the public opinion, in so far as it is free, not bought up by the ruling classes.

Along with the entire phenomenon of the cleavage of classes and of passionate agitation for class interests, our modern literature and the press, much as they have also in certain cases served class interests first and foremost, have still been factors in developing a sound public opinion, the cardinal function of which is to be an emotional reaction against governmental and class abuses. Often as public opinion is petty and shortsighted and obstructive of reasonable reforms, yet at last it always flows into strong accord with the noble and the good, with right and truth. Every efficient and wise government has at last the support of public opinion, whenever it opposes class egoism and class abuses.

Government can do this the easier today because modern society in great states is never divided merely into *two* classes, a controlling and a controlled, but into a whole series of classes with very different interests. To be sure, even in those simple conditions in which only two classes were in question, a princely authority that was sure of its aims has time and again made com-

mon cause with the folk against an aristocracy hostile to the monarchy, and has strengthened its position by the policy. In ancient times all kingly power rested on this basis, as in later times the enlightened despotisms or the Caesarism of Cromwell and of Napoleon. Particularly was and is this true of the policy "divide and conquer," wherever a rural or an urban class of property-owners, or land-owners and manufacturers held each other in check, wherever in addition to these an aristocracy of money operators pursued independent interests, wherever an influential stratum of liberal callings had been formed, which, with little or no property, constituted a cardinal factor of government and of public opinion, and which voted now with the higher propertied classes, now with the lower and non-propertied. By the side of the aristocratic influential classes there is today in most countries a large middle class of peasants, farmers, small artisans, and traders, ready to antagonize the class egoism of the upper and lower classes. All sorts of leagues of laborers with landed proprietors, with the bourgeoisie, with the middle class, occur today. The talented representative of a purely socialistic conception of the history of classes, Loria, admits this; and he makes it the explanation of most of the social advances that have thus far occurred. If the English Tories were the decisive factors in carrying through the English legislation for protection of laborers, and if Bismarck traded with Lassalle, and offered universal suffrage as his play against the bourgeoisie, these things are weighty evidences of the effectiveness of such combinations of different class interests and of their power to overcome opposing class interests.

d) We believe that we may thus prove that necessary internal causes of civic development can and will progressively limit class dominance. We have not therewith proved that class struggles will disappear. We may hope nevertheless that the types of their manifestation and the ways in which they will be settled will become better, fairer, and more reasonable.

The more inchoate law and state were earlier, the more easily did social conflicts lead at once to extremes, to uprising, to revolution, to violence, to wholesale executions, to great confiscations. In antiquity whole centuries were filled with such occurrences.

In modern history they have at least been less frequent. It is worth while to add a remark about the causes which led to the decision in the respective class conflicts and about the way in which the adjustment was made, whether by revolution or by reform.

Of course the most important matter is always the strength and power of the government, the degree of its insight and justice; then the strength and organization of those classes which defend the old and of those which promote the new. In this view the foreground is occupied by the legal situation with respect to the organization of classes, and by the possibility of the psychical development of a strong class consciousness (cf. Vol. I, §§ 135-36). As has been pointed out, in ancient times the upper classes alone easily formed compact organizations, while today the lower classes are often more strongly organized. Along with the type and strength of the organization of classes and parties, much depends also upon the entire public law situation, upon its rigidity or flexibility, upon the degrees of permitted public discussion of abuses, upon the possibility of winning over to the side of reforms the civic organs, the responsible popular assemblies or parliaments. The more flexible public opinion has become by means of modern constitutions, the more is it possible to avoid explosions.

Yet these have always occasionally occurred. Still more frequently have they been stamped out. Usurpers have also succeeded by means of bloodshed. By no means was the unsuccessful party always wrong, nor the successful party always right. Only too easily have accidental circumstances, lack of judgment and of tact on the governmental side, cleverness or unscrupulousness in the revolutionary leaders, the intervention of foreign powers, given to a class a temporary victory, which afforded no guaranty of permanence. Consequently there followed the easy sequence of reaction after revolution, as for example in Greece, Rome, and the mediaeval cities. The outcome may easily be a chain of upheavals, a long sequence of troubled periods. Under such circumstances the lower classes very likely fall into worse conditions than before. Government, even the most arbitrary, is better than perpetual anarchy. Hence, in earlier times, and occasionally even now, foreign domination and military dictatorships are among the outcome of class conflicts.

All reasonable people have therefore constantly demanded reforms, but have condemned revolutions. Antiquity had successful social reforms, like that of Solon, and those of Rome between the fifth and the third centuries before Christ. But the passions of the masses, the pressure of social wrong, have ever and again led to revolutionary programs supported either by the upper or the lower classes. This is in spite of the fact that revolution is always the most precarious of all games of chance. With all our condemnation of revolution, and with all our efforts to prevent it, we may not forget this, viz., that the formal law is often dubious; frequently the real issue is between a higher real law and a worm-eaten formal law. Even unsuccessful revolutions may operate upon subsequent times and upon other states as salutary influences. And in case far-sighted and able leaders succeed early in checking the disorder and in establishing better conditions, the later world has always acclaimed them. The new cannot always succeed by the victories of peace.

Nevertheless, we may hope *today*, and at all events we should wish, that free discussion—publicity—will suffice to accomplish in a peaceful way even the great reforms; that it will not be left to violence and terrorism to achieve them; that a responsible government will be won over to them, will establish them by legal means, and will thus give them the guaranty of permanence. In this way alone is it to be hoped that changes which are genuinely social will gain a place in our institutions, changes which correspond with the personal, psycho-moral qualities of the different classes, and that only those classes will gain new and better rights which show themselves to be the bearers of progress, the rise of which coincides with the total interest of the state.

We may say that even in the past no class was *permanently* elevated which did not on the whole benefit at the same time state and folk thrift; no class fell to a lower plane unless it forgot its duty toward the whole, and retrograded in qualities and capacities, in political or economic virtues. Whenever a middle class is threatened, it will maintain itself only when it regenerates itself economically and spiritually, when its existence and activity are still salutary for the general development. No lower class can permanently raise its social level by merely using clubs, by merely

stirring up hatred and suspicion toward the upper classes, by merely chasing unattainable Utopias. It can win greater political rights and greater income only when it advances technically, economically, and morally, when it proves itself to be a bearer of the total progress, when it develops within itself obedience and discipline and subordinates itself to competent, temperate leaders, and not merely to demagogues who are instigators of revolution.

Class abuses and class dominance will never wholly disappear. Renan once said that the Jewish spirit has worked in universal history as the bearer of social justice, but it everywhere seeks to destroy every fixed powerful government, because, taking human beings as they are, such a government is unthinkable without certain social abuses. There is a truth in this. The spirit of social justice has to arrange compromises with powerful governments, and in the last resort it does this in such a way that extreme democracy ends at last with tyrants and Caesarism.

For peoples in our stage of civilization the immediate concern is the hope that great statesmen, who are capable of governing and elevating their states, will at the same time take in hand social reform, and carry it through with a strong hand but in a peaceful way. While Hardenburg was making such an attempt Niebuhr once wrote to him: "You are treading the treacherous path along which you will be attacked by both reaction and revolutionary radicalism." To be sure, every such path of social reform is threatened in this way. The greater the merit if it leads to the goal. It may come about without violence, never without strength and boldness. The strength may today be gained by *popularity* and democratic tendencies, but more probably among us Germans by attachment to the great traditions of the monarchy.

## 252. THE TOTAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THE PRESENT SITUATION

Having thus outlined in general the relation between class dominance and constitutional development, it remains briefly to characterize the whole course of social development, and to glance at present struggles and their probable consequences:

a) As to the first, we have the socialistic optimistic hope for the disappearance of all class antitheses over against the pessi-



mistic theory which finds in history only a progressive intensification of class contrasts, The socialistic idea presupposes a disappearance of all divisions of labor and occupation, of all differences of race, talents, capabilities, of abolition of city and country, a wiping out of all the more highly endowed as well as the disappearance of all raw and minor forces, with, so far as possible, a future breeding system which will produce wholly like human beings of a mediocre type. We cannot see where the progress would come in here, and still less how and through what sort of causes and institutions we could ever come to such a condition.

On the other hand there is no historical confirmation of the idea of a constantly increasing diversity of classes. If the contrary were the case, the lower classes in modern states would have to be on the level of the Australians or the Fuegians. Members of the same folk, of the same family of peoples, always react upon one another by mixture of blood, language, by other spiritual and physical contacts, and by imitation. Much as individuals and whole classes occasionally rise and assert themselves as an aristocracy, presently there is always a rise of the middle and lower classes, a process of equalization. The two tendencies sometimes make themselves felt simultaneously, but as a rule one follows the other, at least at the highest power of each. Each is the necessary consequence of psychological and societal causes. More than that, we may assert that beyond a certain degree of separation the chasm between higher and lower classes cannot go, unless a suicidal war of classes is to follow. The progress of mankind, in powers of mind and heart, in well-being and in technique, in law and morality, necessarily involves the participation of the lower classes, of the more advanced peoples, in this progress. It is merely a question how great the progress is, how extensive the differentiation of classes meanwhile becomes. The equalization must inevitably come. In all this, history seems to furnish the answer to the question whether class contrasts are growing more or less extreme. The older states which grew great by conquest had their systems of caste and slavery, their prohibitions of marriage between classes, their sharp legal discrimination of classes, their heredity of occupations, their human sacrifices, their savage lack of sympathy. These

were class differences much greater than those known in the ancient civilized states, and the latter in their turn had greater antitheses than modern states. We have nowhere such a class dominance of the rich as prevailed in Greece and Rome. We have also no such mobocracy as occasionally broke out there. We have no such disappearance of the middle class as then occurred, because as heirs of the Greco-Roman civilization we have a legal system on a much higher plane, with much more independent, secure civic authorities, even in (§1) the republics. In the civilized states of today we have more homogeneous race relationships, more equal cultural and moral relationships, in spite of all the new contrasts. Nowhere today do the great landed proprietors or the capitalists control as in ancient times, nowhere is the labor class so disfranchised, so debased, as were the ancient slaves, so depraved and politically incapable as the city rabble of those eras, so full of the lust of blood and of plunder as the mercenaries of ancient times.

On the whole, the causes of these facts are simple. The spiritual and moral advances have, in the course of history, spread themselves more and more to all classes. The more enlightened religious systems—in Europe, Christianity—until a short time ago controlled the entire peoples somewhat equally. The aggregate welfare has so increased that the greater wealth of the upper classes still leaves room for a better standard of life for the lower. All law, all political and economic institutions are humanized. They have eliminated the pitiless severity of the older social conditions. The legal equality, the free choice of occupation, the freedom of settlement, the freedom of marriage, have combined to permit contrasts, possibilities of progress, crossings of blood, which were formerly out of the question. If ancient civilizations ended with world-languages, world-commerce today has produced a unity of spiritual and material life which is socializing; it has called into being the beginnings of a legal system for the world, the rapid imitation of all social progress by one folk after another, as for instance the abolition of slavery, laws for the protection of labor, etc. Such results were inconceivable two or three hundred years ago.

The most important matter after all is always, on the one hand, the change in the world of spiritual energies, of education of ideas,

which is on the one hand of course dependent upon certain material preconditions, but is not given with them in particular; and on the other hand the changes in the entire political, social, and economic institutions. A few additional words must be said on these subjects.

The higher the culture the more does individualism also grow; that is, the desire for gain, egoism. Yet at the same time all the higher feelings are developed: sympathy, pity, fellow-feeling with others not relatives, with fellow-craftsmen, love of country, sense of social obligation. The more dense the population the more do people learn to have consideration for one another. The wants, the customs, the habits, the forms of intercourse become more and more alike. As everyone uses the form *Sie* in addressing everybody else, so it is often difficult to distinguish the clothing of the millionaire from that of the laborer. The increasing ratio of urban life intensifies the pressure for equality, and the idea of equality, increasing political freedom, causes increase of responsibility. With increasing division of labor there always comes again the feeling of solidarity. Increasing insight into the interdependences of society makes people more considerate. More than all, however, the process of social education, as it has been shaped by the higher civilization, has a profound influence upon social structure. So long as parental education is the only type, or instruction by teachers is paid for by the parents, progress remains in the narrowest group of the aristocracy. It advances only in the family which is already on a high plane. Wherever there is a school system the situation is different. The greatest social reformer of antiquity, Solon, after he had abolished slavery for debt and had raised the social status of the trades, proceeded to make the aristocratic schools and the places for gymnastic exercises accessible to the larger part of the folk. A democratic school reform should be the capstone of social reform. The most far-sighted of present English civil officers in India, who have learned that every direct assault upon the caste system is impossible, are expressing of late the confident hope that the spread of the school system will destroy caste within a relatively near future. It is clear that only a universal societary organization of instruction for all makes possible a certain freedom in choice of occupation, offers the possibility of

bringing the talented pupils of the lower schools into the higher, and abolishes the most extreme social antitheses which caused the most evident dependence. We mean such an organization as was present in the germ in the Christian church, such as came into existence for the upper classes in the Middle Ages, such as the Reformers tried to get for all the folk, such as the most progressive governments, particularly of the German, have encouraged in the last hundred years. The decadence of the English proletariat in the first half of the nineteenth century rested solely upon total neglect of the civic duty of maintaining schools. Robert Owen pointed out that schools for the children of laborers were the center of gravity of social reform. Not the school alone, but still the school essentially, and in combination with the other means and institutions of physical, mental, and moral training, controls the future of our lower classes. The more our whole system of culture and instruction is detached from the family, the more it takes shape as a great independent organization in the hands of the state, of the parishes, of the corporations, of the unions, the more the public schools are supplemented by the continuation schools, the trade schools, the arts and craft schools for both laborers and masters, and the whole middle class, the more will the intellectual bonds of the community increase, the more will counterweights be created for the unfortunate hereditary class influences. If an extensive system of church and private schools is admitted, the whole institution will be less a unit than where the state more or less exclusively controls the schools.

Accordingly, as democratic optimists, we may already believe and assert that all hereditary transmission of the higher qualities falls into the background as compared with the influences of education. Already there has been developed in modern population that remarkable flexibility of all physical and spiritual qualities which makes it possible to make anything whatever out of a given individual. It is at all events certain that school, press, theater, public opinion, exert upon the whole population more and more a unifying, leveling influence. A spiritual fluid has been created which makes its way into all the pores and to a certain extent democratizes society. Of late the population of regions

settled by European colonists has been most effectively leveled where there is neither European aristocracy nor European proletariat, where there is a general folk-culture, but not yet a general school training of a high grade, where a selection of sturdy immigrants constitutes a very extensive average of the whole population. In this situation we meet an entirely leveled democratic society, in spite of much greater extremes of wealth than in Europe. Switzerland also, in connection with its system of education, shows similar traits.

While, as we have seen in the foregoing paragraphs, the state-controlled school system and the entire legal and constitutional order are the chief leverages for social progress, we must none the less consider all the economic, and especially the social, institutions in the strict sense. *It is indeed the fundamental idea of our entire outline that it is the social institutions which, while in constant course of improvement, while becoming more and more ethical, set certain limits to the natural play of the acquisitive forces; to the greed of the strong and the rich, and to the growing economic differences of income and their causes.* We have shown above (I, pp. 65-66) that all progress must to be sure be accompanied by conflict; that the price of progress is the destruction of too weak and imperfect individuals and social groups; that, however, both in international and in national conflicts, the peaceful order is gaining; that the forms and means of conflict are undergoing constant limitations. . . .

We have only to reckon with centuries in order to see, for example, how the Egypto-Attic usury legislation, transported by Caesar to Rome, dominated the entire Middle Ages. After the brief period of suppression between 1850 and 1880 it has reappeared and bids fair to grip the whole of our private law. In connection with protection of small peasants we must remember that there was something of the sort in the prosperous period of ancient Greece and Rome, that it was taken up again by the later emperors, that afterward the church and the agrarian societies made experiments with it, that monarchy, gathering strength from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, if not everywhere, at least in many cases, administered it, that in the nineteenth century reforms of agrarian

laws were undertaken from 1807-50, in Ireland the tenant laws from 1870, while the American homestead laws and certain colonial imitations had the same aims and effects. Is it necessary to cite again the guild laws, and the regulations of domestic industries which for centuries protected, elevated, and educated the small producers? Or shall we rehearse the facts of how the education of the modern laborer rests upon his right of association, his trade unions and boards of arbitration, his societies, his insurance laws, his labor clearing-houses, as well as upon the laws protecting labor and the new collective bargains, finally upon his political organization, which has been made a possibility by modern legal changes? Shall we repeat what we said above about the growing restrictions of utterly free economic action, about the increase of local and state officials, about the altered legal organization of private enterprises? As we have tried to show, the great business enterprise, in the form of a mutual society, is becoming more and more a half-public institution, controlled by economic and civic organs and by publicity.

Are not these all deeply penetrating changes of our social institutions, all of which work to the end of restricting brutal class conflicts, of elevating the weak, of limiting the dominance of the strong, of preventing the middle class from sinking as easily as formerly? Never in earlier times has the condition of the lower classes been looked into as in the nineteenth century; never has publicity so concerned itself with the improvement of the conditions of the lower classes as in the nineteenth century; never were their political influence and their power as great, although other eras in small republics had much more democratic constitutions.

It does not certainly follow of necessity from the institutions and spiritual movements so pictured that all the abuses of the present are overcome. In every particular folk it also depends at the same time upon how rapidly population increases, on ability to employ the growing population at home or in colonies or by supplying foreign markets, on the constancy of technical progress and the consequent lightening of the task of support. More than all, too, it depends upon whether the power of the single state in the family of states is on the increase or decrease, whether its consti-

tution operates well, whether the domestic conflicts make the country so weak that it is going backward or is even becoming the prey of foreign conquerors, whether social conciliation is succeeding, whether its great statesmen and party leaders are of the kind that are able to control the passions of the day.

b) This leads us to the second of the questions proposed, viz., to the question of the existing social tensions and conflicts. It is impossible to give a decisive answer, either for a single country or for our whole civilized world. Still we may mention certain probabilities, particularly with reference to the struggle of the proletariat, of the Social Democracy, with the upper classes, especially the *entrepreneurs*, then also with the existing governments, at least as to the probabilities in decades immediately ahead.

Many people today regard the existence of the Social Democratic party as a misfortune and an aberration. They would regard its victory as a relapse into barbarism. They could not have the social democracy, with its press and organization suppressed too soon. They would have universal suffrage abolished, and they would have a government of sharpers, of great capitalists, and landholders. Every brutal revolution might today, with us as elsewhere, produce such a reaction. It might also very easily destroy our national prosperity. Without provocative revolution from below, such a reaction would be a stupid and vicious experiment in a country of compulsory school attendance, and of universal military duty, in a state which for nearly forty years has had universal suffrage. The idea that all political and occupational organization of laborers is an evil overlooks the fact that the only way to make classes rising from a lower condition reasonable is to give them a chance to have leaders of their own organizations, whom they learn to obey. These leaders will treat with the civic power, and later, if not at once, with the other classes. There is only one choice. We have either to crush the laborers down to the level of slaves, which is impossible, or we must recognize their equal rights as citizens, we must improve their mental and technical training, we must permit them to organize, we must concede to them the influence which they need in order to protect their interests. We may not forget that this organization of the laborers alone could so

emphatically remind rulers and property owners of their social duties that a serious social reform would be undertaken. In the day of the dance around the Golden Calf, the voices of science, of the church, of humanity would be much too weak. The self-conscious organization of the labor class in itself is the expression of the historical fact that humanity has reached a unique level of civilization. On this level the lower classes can no longer be made the passive footstool of the higher. They will be a self-conscious, active member of the entire organization.

Thank God, the voices of the reactionary Hotspurs are growing less frequent. We hear less often the indignant words of the party of revolution. Great statesmen like Bismarck and all calm observers have long spoken of the germ of truth in the social democratic demands. Other states, especially with stronger democratic factors in their constitutions, began years ago to make compromises with the labor organizations, and have even made representatives of labor members of the administration.

A part of those who demand the same for Germany are confident in prophesying success on the ground of the change which has already taken place within the Social Democratic party. Since the issue of the Communist Manifesto in 1848 both the views of the leaders and the party itself have changed in the direction of moderation. In Germany the party seemed to have adopted the Marxian principles in 1891, yet only a short time ago (1895) Engels withdrew the bloody revolutionary idea. Its scientifically trained leaders are inclined more or less to abandon the theory of progressive misery, the socialistic crisis theory, the theory of increasing accumulation of capital in the hands of a few. Marx's third volume (1894) had the most to do with revealing the fantastic element in the surplus-value theory. The energetic struggle for political power, i.e., in the first place for more votes in parliament and parish, is really in itself an abandonment of the program of revolution. It is a passage to the legal ground of the modern state.

But every such reconstructing process must be gradual. At first the old extreme, passionate leaders still control, and they try to inflame the masses for revolution and destruction of the existing



social order, although they see that a street revolt would merely promote reaction, that it would cause misery and distress among the laborers, and although they know that the laborers would today be incapable of taking the control of production into their own hands. Here is the danger of the extreme radical movement. It is a question whether the reins would not quickly slip from the hands of a Bebel and a Singer and pass over to more radical associates. Catastrophes and bloody conflicts are thus certainly not out of the question, especially if, at the decisive hour, weak statesmen should be at the head. But such catastrophes may also be averted if, instead of pursuing a policy of violent suppression, the ideal of social peace is honorably maintained, and if there is progressive promotion of the economic, intellectual, and moral elevation of the laboring class, without external intervention with the Social Democratic party, and if thus the way is made easy for the reasonable politicians in the party to get the victory over the demagogues. Under such circumstances blind hatred against all the other classes and all civic authority will gradually disappear. At the same time the false political ideals which still dominate the Social Democracy will be so far modified that the laborers will be capable of co-operating with the other classes and with the government.

The policy and the tactics, not of all the laborers, but of the extreme radicals, rest, as has always been the case throughout history, upon the psychological fact that their thinking and action were governed more by emotion than by understanding, more by *rationalism* than by real knowledge of the world. All the extreme radical parties have certain tracts of juvenility (Rohmer-Bluntschli). They regard themselves as the "good" people, all the other classes and parties as "bad." . . . The laborers are not immediately capable even of understanding the viewpoint of the upper classes and of the government. In their zeal for the victory of the proletariat they cannot understand that to gain their ends permanently all parties and classes must confine themselves to certain practicable aims, while all the areas within the sphere of society must be treated for the time being as, so to speak, a sphere of the truce of God. The historical truth that every advanced stage

of civilization rests upon a mixture and a reconciliation of heterogeneous institutions, e.g., of democratic and aristocratic, of republican and monarchical, is beyond their ken. They exaggerate into caricature the quite legitimate democratic tendency of the time, and the result of such exaggeration, if not counteracted, would be retrogressive by thousands of years.

The democratic idea of equality as produced by Christianity, as formulated by the enlightenment of the eighteenth century, caused most states to give up the privileges of classes and strata, and to substitute equality of rights and of taxation, with some sort of participation in self-government by the folk. The wide extension of the suffrage in England, France, Germany, and elsewhere may be regarded in certain particulars as mistaken or premature. In principle no one acquainted with history can discredit these changes. They were necessary and salutary to protect us against conspiracies and surprises, to give the entire folk political education, and to end ancient class abuses. But the tolerable degree of these tendencies varies. The ratio must be in proportion to the cultural condition of the lower classes, to the services of the upper classes, and to the varying needs of a strong and firm government.

In particular, however, there are certain extreme democratic arrangements which are wholesome in small parishes or cantons, but can be only harmful in great states. Hence it was not illogical for certain radicals, such as Owen and Fourier, to demand that all the great states should be resolved into small local communities. They merely forgot that the demand would amount to destruction of all higher culture and all national independence. Those socialists who want to retain the great state are mostly in the dark about the preconditions of its existence, about the international struggles which threaten it, about the internal structure of force which it presupposes, they think it is compatible with a constitution suitable for a trade union of 50 to 100 members. Direct legislation by the whole folk (obligatory referendum), the imperative mandate in case of members of the lower house, which compels them to vote, not in accordance with their inside knowledge and conviction, but as their constituents direct, the uni-cameral system,

annual elections, the one-man-one-vote system in all elections, the decision about peace and war by the whole folk—these are the extreme democratic demands, which rest upon the idea of popular sovereignty, and which would transfer great decisions from government to folk. They start from the false conception that the lower classes are conspicuous for wisdom and virtue, that the aggregate of their votes would represent all the insight there is. This entirely ignores the fact that all decisions of masses are the resultant more of emotion than of intelligence, that the arithmetical summation of all the votes of a society consisting of different cultural strata always reduces the result to the vulgar needs, judgments, and ideas which are common to all, that even in the case of the people of culture and character, understanding declines in the degree in which they give their votes under the excitement of mass meetings. It is for this reason that for hundreds of years in all the great civilized states the final decisions upon important matters have been intrusted to a single man or to a small body of men, or to senates and lower houses of from 200 to 600 members. The ancient republics perished in the attempt at government by the whole folk. The greatest political progress meanwhile—government by means of ministers and parliaments—would be nullified by the above-mentioned democratic demands.

The like is true of the demand for annual elections of all civil officials and judges and for abolition of standing armies. . . .

The reasonable socialism and radicalism of most recent times, like, for instance, that of the English Fabians, has accordingly already pronounced all these democratic demands archaic and fallacious. For four years the English trade unions have more and more given over the conduct of their affairs to a labor aristocracy and to a body of labor officials. This is practically the case more and more in Germany. The power of the leaders in the Social Democracy is growing daily. Nowhere is faith in authority more necessary than here. A saint-worship toward departed leaders is developing, but in all this a long process is under way, a process of political education. This process should prepare the laborers as far as possible for self-government. They should not be hindered in this process by vicious exclusion from political rights and responsibilities.

In the modern state the issue is whether the laborer shall be treated in every respect justly, fairly, objectively; whether he shall be expected to sacrifice his belief, to be a traitor to his leaders, to resign his present rights. On the other hand it is in order today for the upper classes, whatever the provocation, whatever the particular excesses which the lower classes may commit, to remain calm, instead of yielding either to anxiety or to passion. More than all it is in point that all officials and courts should be warned against partisanship in favor of the capitalistic classes. A generation of administration in this spirit would certainly go far toward solving the social question.

Then of course in the great questions of political constitutions and of economic organization the issue is whether the correct mean may be observed between the concessions which are made to the laborers and the energetic defense of existing property, of the present civic constitution, of the influence which the higher culture and great civic traditions must have, of the organization of power, on which the German Empire rests. If this mean is possible, the goal of conciliation may be reached more easily than in any other state, without revolution but along the path of gradual, moderate reform. In western Europe and in the United States the civil government has less power, or at any rate it has sufficient power only by approach to a dictatorship of a popular statesman, a president. . . .

With us the Social Democrats themselves could rule only through a dictator. . . . Upon the tradition of the monarchy rest all our great institutions—constitution, army, civil service, protection of the peasants, etc.—and if in recent times it has often looked as though the monarchical and bureaucratic traditions had set themselves against social reform, as though they were permanently committed to an alliance with great landholders and capitalists, this was rather a consequence of a constitutional consideration of the majority in the Reichstag and Landtag than deep conviction, and it was also a consequence of the fact that up to the present time the Social Democracy completely neglected the specifically national demands which were proposed in the interest of the power of the state and of the nation.

All this may be modified. It does not exclude an alliance between monarchy and the laborers in Germany. Even today we may say that the monarchy with its organs and the labor world present the most vital political forces in Germany. In comparison with them the old parties and the other classes have the majority, to be sure, but they also constitute the sated and passive elements of public life. Whoever believes that the strongest powers in a state assert themselves will not make a mistake in this prophecy: As in the days of the Stein-Hardenberg leadership, and in 1848-50 1859-62, 1867-75, liberalism combined for reforms with the German bureaucratic and military monarchy, the like will occur with socialism. In the German folk-thrift of the future there would then occur further reconstructions in the spirit of social reform in the interest of the laborers. . . .

This would merely amount to a fulfilment of the most general historical law, viz., that great opposing political energies within the same state always at last find the point of union and of co-operation. This would substantiate a remark of Kaiser Wilhelm II at the beginning of his reign, that the Prussian state, because it has the most fixed monarchical constitution and administration is also capable of most boldly undertaking social reform.